

Reduce waste and strengthen profits

By Doug Loon

The Minnesota Chamber works year-round advocating for the interests of the statewide business community. That's most visible with our efforts at the Capitol where legislative victories can translate into financial savings for all types and sizes of businesses across the state.

Our one-on-one advocacy with Minnesota companies is just as important. Though it does not always garner headlines, we take equal pride in making connections and finding private-sector solutions outside the government purview. Look no further than Waste Wise and Energy Smart, our two sustainability programs that help improve your bottom line and help your organizations become more environmentally sustainable.

Like many of our efforts, the reach of these programs is strengthened by our network with local chambers of commerce. Among our successes:

- Our Energy Smart staff partnered with the Glenwood Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to "sweep" the community. We visited nearly 30 businesses and provided an average of five customized services to each business visited.
- In partnership with Ramsey and Washington counties, our Waste Wise program provides technical assistance to all local chambers of commerce that receive a BizAware grant from these counties.
- During the past several years, the Waste Wise and Energy Smart programs have partnered with more than 20 local chambers of commerce to provide waste or energy technical assistance to their member businesses

Whether you've done a little or a lot on this front, our staff can provide a fresh set of eyes to explore ways to reduce your waste and energy costs. We have the expertise to evaluate your needs no matter how big or small your business.

It's as easy as inviting us into your worksite, and we take it from there. We'll walk through your building and help you:

- Discover new ways to reduce solid waste and maximize recycling opportunities.
- Identify potential for increasing energy efficiency and saving your company money.
- Pinpoint and help you access grants and other financial assistance available for your projects.

Almost any worksite has plenty of low-hanging fruit such as setting up separate containers for disposal of recyclable products and garbage, or replacing light bulbs – projects that can be accomplished with minimal effort and at minimal cost. Our staff can help you tackle more extensive and expensive projects, too – like setting up a waste collection system for a building with multiple tenants, or replacing heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.

A site visit typically last less than an hour. Afterward, we'll provide a written overview of opportunities. If you choose to implement any of the projects we recommend, we'll be a resource to help with implementation and answer your questions.

Contact us today for an on-site evaluation: Jill Curran, Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation executive director, jcurran@mnchamber.com or 651.292.4653, will be happy to assist. You'll soon discover firsthand that "less waste is smart business."

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